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Submitted Testimony Before the House Climate Energy and Environment Committee  
Support for House Bill 4046  
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**Chair Lively, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Levy, and Members of the House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee.**

For the record, my name is Rhys Davis, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 4046. I have been a lifelong Oregon resident and am currently a second-year student at Oregon State University, studying Nuclear Engineering. I am testifying to the session in support of House Bill 4046. This is because I believe that the voters and legislators of this state deserve a transparent, comprehensive, and up-to-date review of the potential for nuclear energy in Oregon, so as to make future decisions on an ample informational basis. This House Bill will deliver exactly that, in a practical and efficient manner.

To begin with, I am in support of this bill because it will shed light on the potential health and environmental risks of nuclear energy development in Oregon. The proposed study will use the Department of Energy's extensive scientific resources to ascertain the safety of both reactors and their unexpended waste, offering a wealth of information on the consequences that nuclear energy may have for the people and environment of Oregon. It is key that this study is specific to Oregon because unique factors in this state may alter the safety of nuclear energy, factors which may not be considered in investigations into the safety of nuclear energy elsewhere. For instance, the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake is a factor that would uniquely affect nuclear energy infrastructure in Oregon. This study, localized to Oregon, would be able to fully elaborate what safety consequences this may have for nuclear energy infrastructure. This information will enable Oregon voters, legislators, energy companies, and other stakeholders to make an informed decision on whether or not nuclear energy is too dangerous to pursue.

Furthermore, the financial feasibility analysis within the proposed study will allow Oregon residents to decide if nuclear energy is detrimental or beneficial to the economic development of Oregon. This study will investigate a wealth of relevant economic considerations, including the total life cycle costs and duration of nuclear power plants, the potential cost of storing unexpended waste, and the overall feasibility of various reactor types. It will weigh with these considerations nuclear energy's potential use (or lack thereof) for supporting our power grid and helping with Decarbonization efforts in energy and industry. The proposed study, local to Oregon, will consider the specifics of Oregon's infrastructure and economy, determining the statewide impact of nuclear power with accuracy and detail that cannot be found in existing resources.

If the voters consider the information yielded by the proposed study and decide that nuclear energy is something to be developed, this study will prepare for nuclear energy infrastructure to be completed

efficiently—without undue waste of our state’s economic resources and legislator’s time. The study will investigate what kinds of nuclear technology options would be feasible in Oregon, what State land in which nuclear energy infrastructure could be built, what laws need to be modified, and in what ways that nuclear energy projects can be financed. It will leverage the specialized resources of the Department of Energy and several more relevant organizations to determine this information, avoiding longer and more costly investigations by Oregon’s local governmental assets or private contractors. If the State decides on development of nuclear energy, all that is needed beyond this cheaply yielded information is action.

It is especially of note that this Bill specifies that the study must engage with local Tribes. Historically, Native Americans have been disproportionately impacted by the development and production of nuclear technology. In including tribal consultation as a cornerstone of the proposed study, it seeks to prevent this trend from continuing, and gives the Native Tribes of Oregon a proportionately amplified voice to inform Oregon’s nuclear energy future.

As a Nuclear Engineering student at Oregon State University, my bias towards this bill needs no mention. However, my opinion on this bill is not predicated on my support for the development of the nuclear industry; I believe that the state of Oregon will greatly benefit from this study even if the result of it is unfavorable for nuclear energy. This is because it will inform Oregon Voters on the safety implications of nuclear technology, the relevant economic considerations for it, and give the State’s Native Americans an explicit voice in nuclear energy development.

I once again wish to thank the committee for the chance to publicly testify; the admirable work done by the staff, Senators, and Representatives of the Oregon legislature in considering these public testimonies should not go by unappreciated.